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NEWMAN MEMORIAL SERMONS

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BY

REV. FR. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

AND

VERY REV. CANON MCINTYRE

PROFESSOR OF SCRIPTURE AT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, OSCOTT

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SERMON

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF

THE NEWMAN MEMORIAL CHURCH
THE ORATORY, BIRMINGHAM

ON

8 DECEMBER, 1909

BY

REV. FR. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

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Cast me not off in the time of old age : when my strength shall fail, do not thou forsake me, until I show forth thy arm to all the generation that is to come (Psalm LXX.).

RATHER more than nineteen years ago you carried out from hence to their resting place the mortal remains of John Henry Cardinal Newman. When a man is just dead, and his soul has but recently passed into the presence of the Judge, his praises, as they rise to our lips, are checked by the thought that his sentence is fresh recorded in heaven, and his soul may haply be lying in a condition which calls for our prayers and intercessions rather than for our eulogiums. But purgatory is unlike hell in this, that every day in purgatory brings increase of hope. Many days have gone by since 11 August, 1890; and the sum of those days mounting up engenders in our hearts a firm confidence that by this time the soul of John Henry Newman has ascended to his place among the Princes of the Church Triumphant. Thence, as he looks down, may it be an access to his joy to behold this day's celebration and this splendid basilica, or, as I may call it, his new Cardinal's titular church, built for him here where he lived and died, to enshrine his memory and—may we hope?—his mortal remains for all time.

How come I to have the confidence, the audac-

ity, to address you on this occasion? I answer, love makes bold. Because I do love John Henry Newman, am enthusiastic on his behalf and jealous of his honour—because for years I have made him one of my private patrons with God, and have daily invoked his intercession—because to me he is as a Father and Doctor of the Church, raised up by God to perpetuate the line of Fathers and Doctors in these latter times, therefore have I made bold to set aside all considerations of capacity or incapacity, and to speak his praises with the confidence of love. It is much to be in sympathy with your subject, and, thank God, that merit at least I can claim. But love should be borne out by knowledge. My personal knowledge of the Cardinal was limited to an audience of ten minutes, during which he struck me as singularly child-like, warm-hearted, simple and truthful. But I have read his writings nearly all through. I have copied him out and written about him: I have meditated on him and endeavoured to imbibe his spirit; and I have been told by those who long enjoyed his familiarity that I have not altogether misunderstood him. Again, one might be glad to see here represented what the author of the “Apologia” fondly refers to, speaking of his freshman’s hopes of “my own perpetual residence unto death in my University”: one might be glad to see represented at least the hundred Catholics in residence there where he made such efforts in his later years to raise the standard of

Catholic academical education, so happily set up since his death. Well, we have Oxford graduates present to-day, notably one, once a boy at the Oratory School, now fellow of his college. There remains further a certain propriety in the University of Oxford furnishing some one, even the least and most insignificant of her alumni, to testify Alma Mater's abiding interest in her great and glorious son.

1. I proceed to indicate what, on careful study, strike me as salient points in John Henry Newman's character. And first I would name his sense of Unseen Powers. As you are aware, in the earliest Hebrew Scriptures the name of God is usually a plural name, Elohim. Taking Elohim to mean divine agencies working on earth, Newman, I say, was peculiarly sensitive to the presence of Elohim. He could not tolerate that too exclusive devotion to physical science which, carrying physics into theology, sees nothing in the Creator more than a power apt to put in execution the laws of nature; a Being, as he says, "who is more certain not to act at all than to act independently of those laws"; a Being whose sovereignty is "a sort of constitutional monarchy, in which the Throne has honour and ceremonial enough, but cannot issue the most ordinary command except with the counter-signature of a minister"; a God "powerful or skilful so far as the telescope shows power or the microscope shows skill".¹

¹ "Idea of a University," pp. 37-8, ed. 1895.

In protest against this misconstruction of the lessons of Nature, Newman was all his life a great stickler for miracles, not certainly for every alleged miracle, but for the possibility of miracles, their greater or less frequency in the post-Apostolic Church, and their doctrinal value. All his life, too, he had a great belief in angelic ministrations, as his Sermon on the Office of Angels in Nature shows, preached at Oxford on St. Michael's Day.

But it is in the supernatural order that divine agencies are most gloriously operative, and in that order Newman was most forward to discern them. By the "supernatural" I mean the order of the Incarnation, that grand descent of God upon nature; I mean the order of redemption, and forgiveness of sin, and admission into heaven. And here I would note in passing how, from the outset of his career and by the fundamental cast of his thought, John Henry Newman stood in diametrical opposition to that modern heresy which has so impudently claimed him for its prophet. Never was Modernist sound on the doctrine of grace: no mind can incline to Modernism that has a right idea of the supernatural. For the supernatural is not the natural sublimated: it is not the highest power of the natural; it is not humanity raising itself to heaven; it is God descending upon earth, and thereby making men as gods. Supernatural Powers are not Nature Powers. Newman was as little of a Modernist as he was of an Erastian, and that is saying a good deal: he had no more

idea of including Grace within Nature than he had of subjecting the Church to the State. From Whately, he tells us, he got his first idea of the Church, as a society complete in itself, and, if complete in itself, then not a department of the State. But the disciple soon outran the master. The Oxford Movement set in, with Newman in the front of it. The great abuse which that Movement endeavoured to eliminate from the Church of England was its subservience to the State, its Erastianism. Of course, the endeavour failed, for is not the Church of England historically by law established, and traditionally by law controlled, by the law of Crown and Parliament, symbolised in the Lion and Unicorn? There was nothing left for the anti-Erastian leader but to come out of her, and come out of her he did, in the midst of his years, exactly the central year of his long life, in the fulness of his powers, and (as then seemed) in the height of his reputation, preferring abjection in the house of God. Little did he foresee that, as an exotic transplanted back to its natural soil and congenial climate, his development was to be carried to its fulness by that renunciation, and that one day he was to be greater in Birmingham than ever he had been in Oxford.

Newman thirsted after the supernatural, and longed to find it everywhere. The world to him was "a barren promontory" without it. He suspected every human institution, he deprecated every scheme for the improvement of mankind,

from which the supernatural was excluded. I may refer to his papers on the Tamworth Reading-room, also to his strenuous opposition to the then nascent University of London, on the ground that that University expressly discarded theology—a gap in its curriculum which in our days has been filled in ; and on this ground he was at one with his great adversary Dr. Arnold, who resigned his fellowship in that same University because it taught no religion. I think there is something felicitous, after all, in the vexatious delays which have thrown back the opening of this church. We are opening on a Feast which commemorates the triumph of the supernatural, the entrance into existence of Blessed Mary, full of grace.

2. The mass of mankind living in ignorance, or, still worse, in conscious rejection of the supernatural, is in the language of Holy Scripture termed “the world”. I know no so well-marked feature in John Henry Newman’s character as this, that he was a man who from first to last set his face steadily against the world. As an Anglican, he might be compared with Bunyan : his Oxford sermons are as redolent of unworldliness as “Pilgrim’s Progress”. Till I began to read him closely and copiously, writing out passages that struck me, I had no idea of what I may call his terrible unworldliness. He was as a John Baptist or Jeremiah : to read him was as wrestling with the Archangel of the Apocalypse who foretells the doom of this world (Apoc. x.). Preparing

to speak of him to a Catholic audience of young men, I felt as though there were utterances of his that I must keep back; I had a fear that my youthful hearers, smitten as youth ever must be by the fascination of life, would not accept them, would take them for exaggerations. I am happy to say I found my fears groundless: the voice that had caught the ear and riveted the attention of the grandsire had not lost its power over the children. Was it not after all the echo of the voice of the Lord? What stronger denunciation of the world can you have than this? "Woe to you that are rich, because ye have your consolation: woe to you that are filled, woe to you when men bless you" (Luke vi. 24-26). "Let us be quite sure," cried Newman, in the pulpit of St. Mary the Virgin in the year 1838, "let us be quite sure that that confederacy of evil which the Scripture calls the world, that conspiracy against Almighty God of which Satan is the secret instigator, is something wider and more subtle and more ordinary than mere cruelty, or craft, or profligacy; it is that very world in which we are; it is not a certain body or party of men, but it is human society itself."¹ Was this sentiment crude and immature? Forty years later, a white-headed Catholic priest, he repeated it against Dr. Fairbairn: "As I believe, the world is identical with human society now". Does not St. John say with equal comprehensiveness, "the

¹ "Sermons on Subjects of the Day": Faith and Experience.

whole world is seated in wickedness," or "lieth in the power of the Evil One"? (1 John v. 19). Human society indeed, as such, is God's institution, and every man in it is God's creature; yet—who can doubt it?—the general trend of human thought is hostile to the supernatural, hostile to the teaching of Jesus Christ, hostile to the Catholic Church. If you look for illustrations, take a file of some representative newspaper of this country.

3. From this view of the world it follows that good Christians are few, comparatively few, I mean, though otherwise I trust that many good Christians are worshippers in this church. This fewness of the supernaturally good is enforced by Newman in one of his most striking sermons, "The Visible Church for the sake of the Elect".¹ He meets that commonest of objections, that Christianity has failed, whereas the work of a Man-God should not fail, by observing that, before we pronounce upon the failure of a movement, we should first ascertain the design of the prime mover; that while Christ died for all, He from the first announced that the majority of mankind would not receive His salvation, that "narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it" (Matt. vii. 14). "Though we laboured ever so much," continues the preacher, "we could never reverse our Saviour's witness, or make the many religious or

¹ "Parochial and Plain Sermons," Vol. IV.

the bad few." It is a delusion to suppose that time ever was in the history of the Church, or ever shall be, when nothing remains to do but to fling yourself into the swim of life and follow the society about you, going after Christ. Why, even in a religious community, it is much if it be possible there. As well expect the natural trend of your passions to lead you to Christ. The world is simply the flesh in the plural number. A good Christian, then, must make up his mind to live in a minority and, as we were told not long ago, "minorities must suffer". He would cease to be a good Christian, were he to throw in his lot with the dominant multitude. He may, nay commonly he should, move about in society, and exchange courtesies and friendly offices with many men. But on all the deeper issues of human aspiration and human conduct, "his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different". Men will say of him, as they come to find him out and know him better, "he is not for our turn" (Wisdom II. 12-15), except, I must add, when a stroke of real good work is to be done, and then he comes forward while the frivolous shrink and fail. What else does the Scripture mean by speaking of us so often as "strangers and pilgrims" (e.g. 1 Pet. II. 11)? Strangers and pilgrims are the few, wandering in a land that does not belong to them, where the mass of the population is alien from them. "I own," said Newman, "I am suspicious of any religion that is a people's religion, or an age's

religion.”¹ At the same time it is the function of the few to act, as Our Lord says, as a leaven upon the many, ever to labour at attracting individuals to come out from among the many and join them, in the confidence that, though they cannot save all, they shall be profitably exercised every day in saving some (1 Cor. ix. 22 R.V.). And so John Henry Newman was profitably exercised every day for a long sixty years, oh, with what diligence! amidst how many failures, misunderstandings and contradictions! oh, with what constancy, and, under God, with what far-reaching success!

It has been said that Newman’s religion was a religion of fear. Yes, as Christianity is a religion of fear, a religion founded on fear, and rising up in love. “Who without fear is innocent?” asks the greatest of Greek tragedians.² Who without fear is religious? asks John Henry Newman. Religion’s “large and deep foundation,” he tells us, “is the sense of sin and guilt, and without this sense there is for man, as he is, no genuine religion”.³

4. The world that Newman opposed is backed by three doughty champions, Money-making, Enjoyment, Intellectualism. Of these the two former are the more prominent, and their action is manifest everywhere. I mean that, go where you will,

¹ “Parochial and Plain Sermons,” Vol. I. : Self-Denial the Test of Religious Earnestness.

² Aeschylus, “Eumenides,” 517-525.

³ “Grammar of Assent,” § Natural Religion. See the whole section with the references there given.

you will find men busy in making money and in spending it upon their pleasure, with small regard for the Gospel, and also with little heed for philosophy, not caring to invoke from the regions of the Unseen any justification of their conduct and aims of life. Seen and sensible goods being the objects of their pursuit, they take it for justification enough that the goodness of these things is a felt goodness and gratifies sense. Such a position is intellectually weak, and the world at times is fain to confess that it is condemned by philosophy, yea, and by riper experience of life. After all said and done, "man liveth not by bread alone" (Matt. iv. 4), nor by Manchester goods. Then Intellectualism rushes in to the world's rescue, and contends that, however the philosophy of life may stand, certainly this Christianity, which demands so many painful sacrifices of human nature, has no foundation in fact and reality. Its warnings may safely be disregarded, and the world go on living for itself, not for God, fearless of God's judgments, and without solicitude for the hereafter. Newman was too intellectual himself not to have his eye upon Intellectualism. Well he knew that, though sense may corrupt, and the splendid imposture of wealth may delude, yet ultimately the fiercest and most inveterate enemy of the Cross of Christ, in man as in angel, is to be found in man's highest and most god-like faculty, even intellect itself. Hence his horror of intellectual pride, above all other sins, a

horror embodied in that famous sentence of the "Apologia" (chap. VII.), "smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive, capricious, and untrustworthy intellect". In several passages of his Anglican sermons he declares intellect, in its application to criticism and philosophy, to have been unknown in Paradise, where man was happier without it, and to have been purchased by the disobedience of the Fall. However that may be, certain it is that to the Christian the duty of restraining intellect within the obedience of faith is quite as imperative as the duty of restraining the sensual appetite within the obedience of reason: you can no more be permitted free thought upon matters religious than you can be permitted free love and unrestrained passion in matters of daily conduct. Newman united a keen exercise of intellect with a distrust of the very faculty he was employing—or rather, I should say, a lively sense of its limitations.

For there is nothing of the sceptic about Newman, nothing of the subjective idealist: he stands clear of the Kantist philosophy and all its progeny: he manifests a robust confidence in the certainties of everyday life, and, needless to say, a faith in divine revelation worthy of a Prince of the Church. It is of the argumentations of the learned that he is distrustful, when they are drawn out with a parade of formal logic and scientific acumen. And the motive of his distrust is briefly this, that in reasoning from verbal premises one is apt to

proceed upon an inadequate view of the facts of the case ; the facts are too multitudinous all to be packed within the premises ; whence one of two results ensues, either that the conclusion is larger than the premises, as taking cognizance of facts or opinions not therein contained, or, being true to the premises, the conclusion falls short of the facts, and is true only hypothetically, speculatively, and in the abstract. Upon this point, Newman has been and is still misrepresented by men who, falling into the very error that he deprecates, will argue from certain passages in his writings, unchecked by what he has written elsewhere. Vigorous and original thinker as he was, Newman will startle you at times. When you are startled, read on, and you will find explanation. The practice of pushing isolated utterances of his to conclusions inconsistent with the general tenor of his speech was a practice that he keenly resented in life ; and, had he lived and wielded his pen these last twenty years, I fear he would have made an example of some of his commentators. " Il faut dépasser Newman," a French writer has said, " we must go beyond Newman ". Go beyond him by all means, his books are not written to imprison you ; but, ere you pronounce upon him, do read him all through. But enough of this.

I have permission to read a letter, one of the last he wrote, which brings out the Cardinal's strong attachment to Holy Church, as also a characteristic fact on which he himself was fond

of dwelling, namely, that religion in him grew as the morning twilight grows into noonday by continual access of light—by addition, not by exclusion. Therefore, it has been well said, you have the whole of Newman—in promise and potency—in his “Parochial and Plain Sermons” preached at Oxford when he was vicar of St. Mary’s. This is the letter:—

24 Feb. 1887.

I will not close our correspondence without testifying my simple love and adhesion to the Catholic Roman Church, not that I think you doubt this: and did I wish to give a reason for this full and absolute devotion, what could, what can I say, but that those great and burning truths which I learned when a boy from Evangelical teaching, I have found impressed upon my heart with fresh and ever-increasing force by the Holy Roman Church. That Church has added to the simple Evangelicalism of my first teachers, but it has obscured, diluted, enfeebled nothing of it: on the contrary, I have found a power, a resource, a comfort, a consolation in Our Lord’s Divinity and atonement, in His real presence in Communion, in His Divine and Human power, which all good Catholics indeed have, but which Evangelical Christians have but faintly. But I have not strength to say more.¹

5. One who had set his face so resolutely against the world that he might have said with St. Paul, “the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. vi. 14), could not “wonder if the world hated him” (1 John iii. 13). What may have surprised him at times, what was in itself far harder to bear

¹ In connexion with this letter, Thomas Scott’s “The Force of Truth,” republished by the Religious Tract Society, will repay reading. For Scott’s influence on Newman see “Apologia,” pp. 5, 6, ed. 1882.

than the world's hatred, was the contradiction and distrust he encountered from fellow-Catholics. The Hebrew Psalmist of old, placed in a similar situation, can find no words to declare his grief, and so breaks off his utterance unfinished. "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it, and if he that hated me had spoken great things over me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him; but thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar who didst take sweet-meats together with me, in the house of God we walked with consent" (Ps. LIV.). History, Holy Scripture, and our own personal experience, tell us of the quarrels of holy men, of Paul and Barnabas, of Chrysostom and Epiphanius, of Cyril and Theodoret, of Bossuet and Fénelon, of Milner and Poynter. But it would be ungenerous to rake up memories of what the Cardinal has long ago condoned, of what is now matter of his reward, nay, probably of the reward also of his opponents, united with him in the fraternity of heavenly bliss. No man learnt this lesson better than John Henry Newman, that what is said of the course of true love holds of every enterprise that makes for the glory of God: the course of such an enterprise never runs smooth, it is opposed by the evil-minded, it is suspected, retarded, thwarted, sometimes for the nonce overthrown, by those who love God and have His glory at heart. The trial of an ardent, zealous soul is the apathy of good men, the recurrent experience that when one thinks to discern

something well worth doing and feasible enough, authority blocks the way, enforcing an attitude of inaction. What is there left for a loyal heart under such discouragement but to wait, to submit—nay, to refuse to be discouraged, to elicit an immense act of confidence in the Church and in the Providence of the Holy Ghost over the Church, “doing all things good in their own time” (Eccles. III. 11). Newman was fond of laying it down that the characteristic of the heresiarch is not so much pride as impatience. The man cannot wait for posthumous results: he must needs bask in the admiring gaze of his contemporaries, and be a living lion in his own generation. “*Nec nihil sunt nec omnia quae iste dicit*” may be said of many an innovator. There is something in what he says, but it is not the whole truth, not the healthy utterance of wisdom: his wisdom, such as it is, is stifled and overlaid with pride and passion, with exaggeration and falsehood. If the man had been a patient man, if he had had confidence in Mother Church, the Spouse of Christ, he might have beheld from a better world the Church adopting whatever was wise in his proposals, while purifying them from their large admixture of human folly. Newman was a patient man, and he has his reward.

It was a tenet with him that the best success is posthumous success, that the fruit of the labourer’s toil should then appear when the evening has come for him, and he has left the vineyard

and gone home. Did not our Master's own labour culminate in the Crucifixion and then show fruit in the Resurrection? "Look through the Bible," says the preacher at St. Mary the Virgin's, "and you will find that God's servants, even though they begin with success, end with disappointment, not that God's purposes or instruments fail, but that the time for reaping what we have sown is hereafter, not here; that here there is no great visible fruit in any one man's lifetime."¹ And in the Meditations of the aged Cardinal we read: "I know that it is true, and will be true to the end of the world, that nothing great is done without suffering, without humiliation. I will never have faith in riches, rank, power, or reputation. I will never set my heart on worldly success or worldly advantages. I will never wish for what men call the prizes of life."²

It was God's will that the prizes of life should ultimately fall to John Henry Newman. After a stormy midday, his sun went down in the crimson splendour of the Roman Cardinalate, in the full radiance of Papal favour, with the gaze of admiring England fixed upon him, recognized and restored in regions whence he had been cast out. Was he then an exception to his own rule, that "the time for reaping what we have sown is hereafter, not here; that here there is no great visible

¹ "Parochial and Plain Sermons:" Jeremiah, a Lesson for the Disappointed.

² "Meditations and Devotions," pp. 474-5.

fruit in any one man's lifetime"? I might reply that these prizes of life were not the fruit that Newman looked for to crown his labours. But I have another reply, and it is furnished by this Memorial Church in which we are assembled. What shall be the success of this church? I augur that, "spiritually examined," as St. Paul says (1 Cor. ii. 14), it shall be a great success. I augur that from this, Cardinal Newman's Memorial Church, from this his Oratory of St. Philip, from this his Oratory School, and from these the many volumes of his writings, from these four sources as from four rivers of Paradise good shall flow, greater than the good that he was able to accomplish in his mortal life. I augur that in and about this church, in this city and diocese of Birmingham, at Oscott, and even in far-off Oxford, there shall grow up and be perpetuated a school of Newman's thought, so far as that thought is the thought of the Catholic Church and the mind of Christ, for not otherwise would he ever have wished it to go forth. I augur that from this spot, the central city of our isle, shall be wrought out, not perhaps the conversion of England, but what the Cardinal, with his distrust of a popular religion, loved rather to contemplate, the conversion of Englishmen. I augur that Catholics, sore tempted in faith, shall here be strengthened in the same, first by prayer and Mass and Sacraments, then by what I have long considered the best philosophy for an English Catholic layman, the teaching of

John Henry Newman, taken as a whole—I say, “taken as a whole,” the whole gist and spirit and mind of the man.

And thus shall be accomplished the words of my text: I quote them this time as you may read them on the monument in the north wall of Littlemore Church; he chose them for the epitaph of his mother; the prayer which, put by him in the mouth of his dead mother, was heard eminently for himself: “Cast me not off in the time of age, forsake me not when my strength faileth me, until I have shown thy strength to this generation, and thy power to all them that are yet for to come.” Such the prayer put up in 1836. For nine more years John Henry Newman went on showing the strength of God to the generation that then was at Oxford, first by word in St. Mary’s Church, then by example in retirement at Littlemore. Then came the change, and “he was seen no more” at Littlemore nor at Oxford, “because God took him” (Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5). So it came about that in ways unforeseen, elsewhere, he still went on showing God’s power to other men and to others that were yet for to come, “unto old age and grey hairs” (Psalm LXX. 18). You, my Fathers of the Oratory, are witnesses—and more than witnesses, your affectionate care secured it, that the venerable Cardinal was not cast off in the time of age, nor forsaken when his strength failed him. You bore him up, and a generation of boys grew around the old man,

looked into his face, and loved him. And further, and further still, in this Church and Oratory, to every generation that is for to come shall be told the might of God's arm revealed in John Henry Newman, his wonderful conversion, the power of his preaching and writings, the example of his long, laborious and holy life. And not in vain shall it be told, but as Samson's dying feat was to the destruction of the Philistines, so shall the memory and the word of Newman be to the conversion of Englishmen: dead, he shall bring more souls to the Faith than he converted in the days when he wrought the deeds of a strong man in Israel. Amen.

SERMON

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF

THE NEWMAN MEMORIAL CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM

ON

SUNDAY, 12 DECEMBER, 1909

BY

VERY REV. CANON M'INTYRE

PROFESSOR OF SCRIPTURE AT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, OSCOTT

Who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. iv. 24).

On an occasion like this, when the memory of Cardinal Newman comes back to us clear and distinct, we feel that the only adequate voice of praise is the voice of his own pure and lofty character. Simply to be known for what he was is his highest praise, and therefore I feel how unbecoming it would be for me to attempt to praise him ; but it would be doubly unbecoming to do so in the midst of those whose closer personal knowledge would incomparably better fit them for the office, whose eyes for so many years gazed on the bright example of his virtues, and who still hold his name in deepest reverence. And then there came into my mind an incident from the life of the prophet Ezechiel. For years that great and holy prophet had laboured among his captive fellow-countrymen, bringing to them message after message from God. The messages were listened to, were admired and even eagerly sought after, but what they were intended to effect remained unfulfilled. Therefore, in the tenth year of the captivity, God spoke to the prophet, and said : " Thou art to them as a musical song which is sung with a sweet and agreeable voice. And my people sit before thee,

and hear thy words, but do them not" (Ezech. xxxiii.). Now, the life and writings of Cardinal Newman are indeed as a musical song which is sung with a sweet and agreeable voice, and we gladly listen to his words, but there is a danger lest their very attractiveness, and the admiration with which they fill us, may distract our attention from the more serious and fruitful duty of imitating his virtues. Instead, therefore, of speaking words of praise and admiration I propose to study a great principle of conduct upon which he acted all his life through, and I do so in the hope that his example may persuade us never to depart from it.

The principle I refer to is not only utterly opposed to the current thought of the day, but it postulates as absolutely essential for man's eternal welfare that which the current thought, and even the current religious thought, of the day either ignores or openly denies. The principle of which I speak, runs as follows : the "holiness, without which no man shall see God" (Heb. xii.), can be acquired only through religion ; but the religion through which alone it can be acquired, is not the creation of our own feelings and experiences—is not a mere supply created to meet the demands of our religious sense—but, in the words of Cardinal Newman, is "an external fact and a work of God"; therefore the spiritual-mindedness and heavenly-mindedness which Scripture demands as a necessary condition of salvation, does not consist—I am again citing the Cardinal's

own words—does not consist “in the affections, in the imagination, in inward persuasions and consolations, in pleasurable sensations, sudden changes, and sublime fancies, but in a straightforward acceptance of revealed truth and an acting upon it”.

The principle is based on the relations between man and God, and on a fixed law of God’s supernatural providence. Man is a creature of flesh and blood; but what tongue can describe the majesty and holiness of God? The prophet Isaias beheld not the very Substance of God, yet even such vision of God as was granted him oppressed him with an overpowering sense of the Divine Majesty and Holiness. Filled with terror, he cried out, “Wo is me, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the King the Lord of hosts” (Isa. vi. 5). St. Paul, again, whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell, was caught up into Paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter; but what he could say was, that God is light—a light so intensely dazzling that no human power of vision could endure its brightness: “the Blessed and only Mighty . . . inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. vi. 16). We need not ask if any creature may claim the right to break in upon the dread, eternal privacy of God, and peer into the infinite depths of the Divine Being; even if a man happened to find his way into the presence of the All-

holy, he would be immediately confounded and overwhelmed, his nature would fail, his very being would break, beneath the strain of Infinite Majesty, unless the hand of God were put forth to sustain him. "He that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory" (Prov. xxv. 27). And again, "No man hath seen, nor can see". That God should vouchsafe to His creatures the unveiled vision of Himself, is an act not only of infinite condescension, but also of infinite power. Man must first be made God-like before he can endure to live thus closely with God. If therefore God had decreed never to admit any into the inner shrine of His Sacred Presence, none would have had cause for complaint. Nay, is it not astonishing and almost incredible that God should make the favour possible to us, even on any terms? Now the means by which God makes the unveiled vision of Himself possible to us, the grace of His power by which He fits us for that vision and prepares us for entrance into heaven, the helps which He gives us that we may walk on earth, worthy of our heavenly calling, all these constitute what is termed the supernatural order; so that from the very nature of the case we must belong to the supernatural order as a condition of admission into heaven. From this it is plain that when Scripture speaks of "holiness, without which no man shall see God," such holiness cannot be the fruit of our own labour alone—for how could our own hands fit us for what is beyond the power of all created

nature—but a holiness that is supernatural and is a work of Divine power. Without this holiness nothing else can avail. Even if men were to reach that golden age of human perfection of which poets have dreamed ; if knowledge covered the face of the earth as the waters cover the sea ; if a perfect social order were established, wherein peace and plenty abounded and everyone possessed every natural virtue ;—all these things combined would not, of themselves alone, advance man one single step nearer the unveiled vision of God. They belong to totally different spheres, and are simply incommensurable. Man at his highest and best is but man ; human nature, however polished and refined, is only human nature, and still remains within its own boundaries of the natural ; and the words of the Apostle would sweep away every claim it put forward to the supernatural glories of heaven : “Flesh and blood cannot possess the Kingdom of God ” (1 Cor. xv. 50). The Incarnate Son of God, and the Cross on which He died, rise in protest against every supposition of man’s own power to win a place for himself in the home of God. The kingdom of God is for the sons of God alone, for those who can claim a divine descent. “The first man was of the earth, earthly : the second man from heaven, heavenly. Such as is the earthly, such also are the earthly : and such as is the heavenly, such also are they that are heavenly ” (1 Cor. xv. 47). Just as by the law of God’s natural providence we “cannot gather

grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles," so by the law of his supernatural providence we cannot gather heavenly fruit from a merely natural plant. A heavenly harvest requires heavenly seed. This truth our Lord would impress upon us by His saying, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. xv. 13).

But now, dear brethren, note that that heavenly planting is not done in every soil; the only soil possible is the soil of faith in God's revealed or supernatural truth. A supernatural plant requires a supernatural soil. "As many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12). And St. Paul gives point to this doctrine when he says, "that I may be found, not having my own justice (or righteousness), but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus" (Phil. III. 9). From this we may gather the absolute urgency of the words, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6); for we perceive that faith is necessary, not only because our minds are weak and erring, and need guidance; not only because we owe to God as the Supreme Truth that homage of our intellect, which faith implies; it is necessary for a far deeper reason—it is an absolutely necessary condition of God's communicating to us that supernatural holiness without which we shall never see His face.

I trust that what I have said may enable you to understand the position which Cardinal Newman took up, when he insisted, as throughout his life he insisted, that holiness before God does not depend on the satisfaction of our own religious sentiments—though such satisfaction certainly may, and generally does, accompany it—but on truth revealed by God to be believed and acted on; that the only holiness recognized by God in those who are candidates for heaven, is the “holiness of truth”—a holiness which rests on revealed truth as its foundation. This principle, so far-reaching in its practical consequences, was held by Newman, at least in its substance, from a comparatively early age. He wrote thus, in reference to it, in the “Apologia”: “I have changed in many things, in this I have not. From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery.”

Now, by dogma he means definite religious truth which has been revealed, and which, because it has been revealed, must be accepted by the mind and firmly believed in; moreover, because it is truth and is believed in, it brings knowledge to the mind. Its essential and direct purpose is to bring knowledge, not sentiment; and since it brings knowledge, it can be expressed in precise and definite language and so formed into a creed. Therefore in saying “dogma has been the fundamental

principle of my religion," he meant much more than a vague belief in some religious truth in general, or in some form of doctrine which he accepted as true inasmuch as it seemed to suit his religious temperament and made him feel religious ; he meant a definite scheme of truth, which is true altogether independently of himself, and would be no less true even if he had never heard of it, or if, hearing of it, he had felt no attraction towards it. Consequently, he went on to say : "Secondly, I was confident in the truth of a certain definite religious teaching, based upon this foundation of dogma, viz. that there was a visible Church, with sacraments and rites, which are the channels of invisible grace. . . . Here, again, I have not changed."

In the eyes of Cardinal Newman, then, there can be no real religion, and consequently no true holiness, unless it be the fruit of a definite creed. There may be religious fruit which is "fair to the eyes, and pleasant to behold," but unless its root be found in definite revealed truth, such fruit will not be the fruit of the tree of life, and will be the more dangerous the more attractive it appears. Hence, when some of his friends began to speak admiringly of the manifold beauties of the Church of Rome, he, having been taught from his earliest years that Rome had corrupted the creed, not only remained firm and unbending in his antipathy against her, but even felt constrained to regard her as anti-Christian and the Pope as Antichrist.

The strength of these feelings against her, on the score of her supposed infidelity to the creed, is manifested in his record of a tour which he made, in the early months of 1833, in the south of Europe. He says, "We kept clear of Catholics throughout our tour". Even Rome did not draw him out of his isolation. He says, "I saw nothing but what was external; of the hidden life of Catholics I knew nothing". But as it had happened to the patriarch of old, so did it happen to him: God was near, though he knew it not. He had but touched, though not in faith, the hem of Rome's garment, and power had gone forth from her. But the day of perfect healing was still far off. To use his own simile, Rome had been to him like the good Samaritan, pouring wine and oil into his wounded spirit. His heart was touched, but his mind remained as firmly opposed as ever. Rome was still the "Samaritan foe," who repelled even when attracting. To these conflicting forces within him he gave utterance in the sonnet, beginning:—

Oh that thy *creed* were sound!
For thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,
By thy unwearied watch and varied round
Of service in thy Saviour's holy home.

Newman himself had begun to feel some of that attractiveness which his friends had felt in the great Church of Rome. A vision of Rome's spiritual glories, though as yet but dimly, was rising before his eyes. But the principle of dogma

stood in the way of nearer approach. No attractiveness, no zeal, no apparent spiritual glory, no soothing power, could avail in Newman's eyes unless they were based on soundness in the faith ; and so there seemed to be an insurmountable barrier between him and Rome.

But a strange thing was to happen ; that very principle of dogma, which then made him look upon Rome with such unfriendly eyes, was destined to make him one of Rome's most loyal and obedient children. He was to be rewarded by heaven for his unswerving devotion to revealed truth, with the blessing promised by our Lord : " If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome ". By what we cannot but regard as an impulse of grace, he entered upon a profound study of the lives and writings of the great Saints and Doctors of the early Church. As he read, the form and features of modern Rome, supreme and inflexible in authority, seemed to rise from the silent records of the past. This was so unexpected by him, so startling, that he felt like one who had seen a ghost. Was it a ghost, or was it a reality with promise of far-reaching importance for his future line of conduct ? Only a closer examination could determine. As that examination proceeded, the scattered beams of light coalesced into one full manifestation, by the brightness of which he perceived that the authority of Rome was the hidden support of those ancient creeds upon which his whole religion had rested, or as he had thought it

rested ; he perceived that Rome was the living reality which had made the saints, and that to her the voices of the saints gave concordant testimony. As it were scales fell from his eyes ; but what he beheld had best be described in his own words : “ I recognized at once a reality which was quite a new thing with me. Then I was sensible that I was not making for myself a Church by an effort of thought. I needed not to make an act of faith in her ; I had not painfully to force myself into a position, but my mind fell back upon itself in relaxation and peace, and I gazed at her almost passively as a great objective fact, and I said, ‘ This is a religion ’ . ”

What had happened to bring about so remarkable, so wonderful a change ? Simply this : Newman had been convinced from the first that there could be no religion unless it were founded on dogma, on definite revealed truth, and he sought with all the ardour of his soul to be among the number of those who according to God are created in justice and holiness of truth ; he wished to be found by God not having his own righteousness, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus. But he was also convinced that that faith of Christ Jesus had been enshrined in a visible Church. This truth of the visible Church had been from early times summed up in the formula, “ Where the Church is, there is Christ ”. To the Church therefore he went to learn the truth of Christ, and he discovered this, “ Where Peter is, there is the

Church". For the first time in his life he saw his lifelong principle in its connexion with a truth hitherto unknown to him—"Where the Church is, there is Christ," and, "Where Peter is, there is the Church,"—and the inevitable conclusion, luminous and comprehensive, forced itself upon him : therefore where Peter is, there is Christ.

This was indeed like a vision from heaven ; no wonder that in presence of that vision his mind fell back upon itself in relaxation and peace, and that, compared with what he saw, the abode in which he had hitherto lived was but a "city of confusion and a House of Bondage". Thought came flashing after thought across his mind. In the penetrating light of his new discovery he sorrowfully recognized that, even to himself, religion had really been "more a matter of feeling and experience than of faith". The feeling, however, had been no ignoble one. It sprang from something akin to religious gratitude for many spiritual benefits received in the past ; it was bound up with his earliest and most cherished recollections ; it had deep roots in his affection for his native land and for her time-honoured institutions. These ties were strong, and might easily be mistaken for religion ; but his mind was penetrating enough to see that these things, beautiful and tender in themselves, cannot take the place of revealed truth as the basis of religion. Even in their purest form, they are only human, and the tenderest memories, the most patriotic attach-

ments, the most exalted religious sentiments, even when arrayed in the amplest and richest garments of Catholicism, do not make a Catholic religion, nor create a Catholic Church. The essential foundation is wanting; the living spirit is away. With his newly acquired knowledge Newman was quick to perceive how wide a gulf separates the real religion of historic Catholicity from those forms of religion which outwardly resemble it so closely. Failure to note this essential difference perplexes many, but it deludes far more into being content to remain where they are, outside the Catholic Church. Cardinal Newman thus speaks of it: "This is why we have to lament, in times past and present, the resolute holding off from us of learned men in the Establishment, who seemed or seem to come nearest to us. Pearson, or Bull, or Beveridge, almost touches the gates of the Divine City, yet he gropes for them in vain; for such men are formed on a different type from the Catholic, and the most Catholic of their doctrines are not Catholic in them. In vain are the most ecclesiastical thoughts, the most ample concessions, the most promising aspirations, nay, the most fraternal sentiments, if they are not an integral part of that intellectual and moral form which is ultimately from divine grace, and of which faith, not carnal wisdom, is the characteristic."

His own soul was too clear-sighted in the things of the spirit to be led astray and blinded by such carnal wisdom. He had listened to the voice of

Christ, which said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me;" and therefore for him, farewell to all earthly pride and glory, farewell to every earthly friend, if only he might be joined to God's heavenly friends. "Be my soul with the Saints! and shall I lift up my hand against them? Sooner may my right hand forget her cunning and wither out-right, as his who once stretched it out against a prophet of God! anathema to a whole tribe of Cranmers, Ridleys, Latimers, and Jewels, perish the names of Bramhall, Ussher, Stillingfleet, and Barrow, from the face of the earth, ere I should do aught but fall at their feet in love and in worship, whose image was continually before my eyes, and whose musical words were ever in my ears and on my tongue." Where indeed could he find holiness if not in the Church of the Saints? and because he wished to be associated with the Church of the Saints, he made his submission to the Vicar of Christ; and so, if I may apply the language of Scripture, "in Sion was he established, and in the holy city he likewise rested, and in Jerusalem was his power. And he took root in an honourable people, and in the glorious company of the saints was he detained." From first to last he had not changed his principle that holiness and religion must spring from revealed truth; but history and the Saints, as well as Scripture, had taught him at whose lips to seek the knowledge of that revealed truth. "Revelation," he wrote, "is all in

all in doctrine; the Apostles its sole depositary, . . . and ecclesiastical authority its sole sanction." And still more emphatically: "Deeply do I feel, ever will I protest, for I can appeal to the ample testimony of history to bear me out, that, in questions of right and wrong, there is nothing really strong in the whole world, nothing decisive and operative, but the voice of him, to whom have been committed the keys of the kingdom and the oversight of Christ's flock. That voice is now, as ever it has been, a real authority, infallible when it teaches. Before it speaks, the most saintly may mistake; and after it has spoken the most gifted must obey." Therefore, dear brethren, Cardinal Newman made no idle utterance—for he was absolutely incapable of such rhetorical insincerities—he made no idle utterance, but spoke the sincere and earnest language of his inmost heart, when he publicly declared: "My sole aspiration—and I cannot have a higher under the heavens—is to be the servant of the Vicar of Christ." "The servant of the Vicar of Christ";—would that these words were ever ringing in the ears of those who profess to cultivate the spirit of Newman but do not. No one can walk in spirit with Newman unless first with whole-hearted loyalty he has made himself "the servant of the Vicar of Christ".

"The servant of the Vicar of Christ;"—these words should be the motto of all who do not seek for holiness through their own impressions, their own

fancies, their own sentiments, but seek to be created according to God in justice and holiness of truth.

“The servant of the Vicar of Christ;”—the world is first bewildered, and then made angry, when it hears professions like this fall from the lips of men of undoubted intellectual power. How the air is filled with cries of protest against the imprisonment of the intellect! But Newman lived in a serener region of clear truth, where such cries had no power to disturb him. His answer to the protesters was short and decisive. “Catholicism, forsooth, ‘confines the intellect,’ because it holds that God’s intellect is greater than theirs.” “Let the world cry out, if it will, (against the Catholic) that his reason is in fetters. . . . Fetters, indeed! yes, ‘the cords of Adam,’ the fetters of love, these are what bind him to the Holy Church; he is, with the Apostle, the slave of Christ, the Church’s Lord; united, never to part, as he trusts, while life lasts, to her Sacraments, to her Sacrifices, to her Saints, to Mary, to Jesus, to God.”

“The servant of the Vicar of Christ;”—you know, dear brethren, that Cardinal Newman chose as his motto, “Heart speaks to heart;” and may the words which he spoke from his heart be a continual warning to our restless hearts where to look for assured possession of that revealed truth through which alone we can gain true holiness—holiness not according to ourselves, but according to God—“holiness, without which no man shall see God”.

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